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LETTER DATED 14 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the following response to the letter dated 30 September 1997 addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom (S/1997/760) concerning reports in the British press that British soldiers had killed Iraqi prisoners of war in 1991:

1. The British Government's letter jumps to the conclusion that the United Kingdom rigorously applied the third Geneva Convention of 1949 during the Gulf War before any results have been announced by the investigation initiated by that Government into the crime of the killing of Iraqi prisoners by British soldiers. This confirms that the British Government lacks objectivity and seriousness in dealing with a grave violation of international humanitarian law committed by its soldiers against Iraqi prisoners of war.

2. The accusation made in the British letter that Iraq mistreated British prisoners of war over the same period is no more than a transparent attempt by the British Government to conceal its flagrant violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. The facts confirm that the Republic of Iraq was the only party to conduct itself in accordance with international humanitarian law and the 1949 Geneva Convention and to release all prisoners immediately on the cessation of active hostilities under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

3. We again urge the British Government to disclose all the details of the crime of killing Iraqi prisoners, to institute the necessary legal proceedings against the perpetrators and to assume full international responsibility under international law.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Saeed H. HASAN
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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